

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
VALDOSTA DIVISION**

JAMES STEVENS *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

3 SQUARES DINER LLC,

Defendant.

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CASE NO.: 7:24-CV-27 (WLS)

**Order**

Plaintiff James Stevens and his Counsel move to appear remotely at the fairness hearing (Doc. 40) on the motion for approval of the Parties' FSLA settlement, currently scheduled for Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 2:00pm. (Doc. 39.) Stevens states that counsel "can address any concerns the Court has with the settlement through a remote appearance" (Doc. 44). Plaintiff notes that "no objections have been submitted by any collective member," Defendant does not oppose this request, and that "[s]ettlement approval has been addressed extensively in the briefs." (*Id.*)

It has long been the Court's practice to require in-person attendance at hearings. Although the COVID-19 pandemic required accommodations, the Court has returned to its longstanding practice of requiring in-person attendance. However, the Court requested this hearing to discuss the low consent rate and recovery, the reasonableness of attorneys' fees in light of the low consent rate, and the impact *Johnson v. NPAS Solutions, LLC*, 975 F.3d 1244 (11th Cir. 2020) may have on the proposed incentive award for Plaintiff. Plaintiff does not assert that these concerns do not involve evidentiary issues that usually makes an in-person, on-the-record hearing preferable. However, the Court finds these issues are legal in nature and that in-person attendance by Plaintiff is not necessary for the scheduled hearing only.

Therefore, the Motion for Hearing (Doc. 40) is **GRANTED**. To prevent the potential for technical issues in a hybrid hearing, the Court invites Counsel for Defendant to appear remotely as well. If Defendant chooses to appear remotely, counsel must inform the Courtroom Deputy by **Friday, September 19, 2025**.

**SO ORDERED**, this 17th day of September 2025.

/s/ W. Louis Sands  
**W. LOUIS SANDS, SR. JUDGE**  
**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**